

INSTITUTE FOR WORK AT HEIGHT



Good Practice Note 2020

Good Practice notes inform the industry on how to embrace best practice and how to deal with issues that may arise. They are aligned with, but do not replace regulation as well as endorse industry standards

The use of ladders against pole structures

Topic:

A concern was raised regarding the competency of a fall arrest technician to use a ladder placed in the upright position against a pole structure.

Competency:

The definition of a "competent person" means a person who—

- a) has in respect of the work or task to be performed the required knowledge, training and experience and, where applicable, qualifications, specific to that work or task: Provided that where appropriate qualifications and training are registered in terms of the provisions of the National Qualification Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008), those qualifications and that training must be regarded as the required qualifications and training; and
- b) is familiar with the Act and with the applicable regulations made under the Act;

Therefore, it is advised that the minimum training required is;

1. Technician doing the work
 - US ID 229998 – Basic Fall Arrest Technician.
2. Technician doing the rescue
 - US ID 229995 – Fall Arrest Technician.

There is an additional LNQ (Learning not qualification) available for the safe use ladders, registered with the IWH;

- LNQ 20190039 – Ladder User (max 14m)
- LNQ 20140007 – Ladder User (max 20,3m)
- LNQ 20140008 – Ladder Inspector

NOTE: An LNQ is written when there is no existing unit standard but also establishes competency and is written the same way as a unit standard.

Access Method: Ladder attachment:

An extension ladder can be tied down against pole structures using standard 11mm static kernmantle rope (SANS 51891/EN 1891 certified). Thereby they can then attach using the ladder as their point of anchor while completing their tasks, as the ladder will be tied down at the top and the bottom.

This involves doing the following;

1. Prior to extending the ladder, tie one end of the rope to the top left-hand side of the ladder.
2. Place the ladder against the pole and move the rope around the pole. The rope will now be at the front right-hand side of the ladder and behind the pole.
3. Extend the ladder to the required working height - Do not overextend the ladder.
4. Pull the rope tight.
5. Feed the rope underneath the rung towards the stile, at the third or fourth rung from the bottom of the ladder. This action will prevent the rope from sliding to the centre of the rung.
6. Pulling tight, wrap the rope around the pole once and feed to the inside of the left stile.
7. Feed the rope under, over and under the rung, again and to the left and outside of the stile. This action will prevent the rope from sliding to the centre of the rung.



Ladder access:

1. The technicians must climb the ladder by attaching one of the fall arresters safety lanyards to the ladder rung prior to climbing.
2. Once attached the technicians climbs up the ladder one or two rungs and attaches the other lanyard to the rung above him.
3. This action is repeated until the required work position is reached.



Additional Access Method:

There is a technique where you can use a remote/extension pole to set up a temporary vertical lifeline (using rope) onto the pole where there is an anchor point available on the pole. The person then access and use the ladder using the temporary vertical lifeline as the primary system.

This allows for safe ladder work to be performed and is also more time effective, as it is a “hook up and climb” system.

Rescues Required:

In case the technician falls off the ladder and is suspended, the rescuer can then use the ladder for safe access. A sling is wrapped around the top part of the pole and then a descend rescue system is used to either descend to the casualty or remotely attach the casualty to perform a safe rescue.

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Limitations:

Ladders need to conform to the following:

1. Selection of ladder for applicable use
 - SANS 50131-1 / Ladders Part 1: Terms, types, functional sizes
2. Manufactured, tested and marked according to the relevant standard;
 - SANS 50131-2 / Ladders Part 2: requirements, testing and marking
3. Used correctly as stipulated by the manufacturer according to the standard:
 - SANS 50131-3 / Ladders Part 3: User instructions

Notes:

All equipment needs to be placed in a tool/equipment carry bag or attached to a tool lanyard. Equipment may not be carried up any part of the ladder or passed on over any part of the ladder.